

[English]

Expansion of Shipping Industry

2860. SHRI VIJAY NAVAL PATIL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the estimate of additional cargo tonnage likely to be generated during the next three years; and

(b) the steps taken to increase the shipping fleet to meet the increasing traffic?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYLER): (a) The Working Group on Shipping set up by Planning Commission for the period 1990-95 has assessed the requirement of tonnage at 7.73 Million DWT upto 1994-95. The actual tonnage that may be acquired would depend mainly on the availability of resources including foreign exchange.

(b) The Government have taken a number of steps to increase the shipping fleet to meet the increasing traffic. These include:-

(i) Streamlining of licensing procedures which has enabled quicker ship acquisition in the fluctuating International Market.

(ii) Revised age norms for acquisition of second-hand vessels.

(iii) Permitting Shipowners to acquire bulk carriers of 10-30,000 DWT without approaching the Ship Acquisition Licensing Committee;

(iv) Proposals for replacement of existing tonnage will not be placed before the Ship Acquisition

Licensing Committee, if the replacement proposal is within 25% in excess or less than the tonnage to be replaced.

(v) Permitting Private Shipping Companies to place orders on Indian shipyards without reference to assessed requirements.

[Translation]

Customs Duty Evasion

2862. SHRI RAJESH KUMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some cases of customs duty evasion of more than one thousand crore rupees by misusing the Advance Free Import Licence have come to notice of the Government;

(b) if so, the details of such cases during last three years and action taken there on; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to check such evasion in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (c). No case involving Customs duty evasion of more than rupees one thousand crores by misusing the Duty Exemption Entitlement Scheme has been noticed. The Customs authorities are vigilant against the evasion of Customs duty.

[English]

Priority sector lending by Banks

2863. SHRINIRMALKANTICATTERJEE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state: